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*BY ROB HAVENS '88*

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**On the Cover:** Christian Kirk returns punt for a 90 yard touchdown vs. UNM.  
Photo by Rob Havens '88.



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# Howdy Ags!

The leaves are changing here in Aggieland and it's a busy time for Aggie sports! The football season is wrapping up and inside this issue we take a look back at the first ten games of the season. Though it has been an up and down year, Coach Sumlin said this is one of the closest teams he has ever coached as our players have continued to fight and give great effort.

Our men's basketball team started the regular season off over 5,000 miles from home in an airplane hangar at Ramstein Air Base in Ramstein-Miesenbach, Germany. There has been a lot of excitement coming into this season and the Ags hammered West Virginia, the #11 team in the country, in front of a crowd of service men and women and their families around Veterans Day. Check out our basketball preview inside to find out what we can expect this season.

Our women's basketball team is loaded with talent and depth. Please enjoy our preview of the team, taken from Coach Blair's visit at media day.

The most exciting team on campus has to be our women's soccer team. Currently on a 14-match winning streak that includes an SEC Championship win! The team has already won their first-round match and is motivated to get to the College Cup.

The fall was also highlighted by a dual-match win over tu by our men's swimming and diving team. It was the first time in 55 years for the team to accomplish the feat so a big congratulations is due! Nothing like sawing 'em off after a victory when the horns are in the building!

We are excited to cover all of the Aggie sports as we wrap up 2017. And don't forget, a subscription to Aggieland Illustrated is always a perfect Christmas present for your favorite Aggie!

Gig'em Ags!

*Rob '88*



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## senior day...

Aggie Soccer players Stephanie Malherbe, McKayla Paulson, Haley Pounds and Mikaela Harvey celebrated Senior Day with their families and the coaching staff of Texas A&M. Words can't express what these young ladies have meant to this program. After the ceremony, the team defeated Vanderbilt 2-1 for their ninth consecutive win.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.



snapshot







## “mond”ster stiff arm...

Dual threat quarterback Kellen Mond shows the Gamecocks his ability as he breaks away from the defender in the Aggie win against the University of South Carolina. The talented true freshman rushed for 106 yards in the contest and threw for 159. The Ags trailed 17-7 before mounting a comeback and scoring 17 unanswered points for a final tally of 24-17.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.





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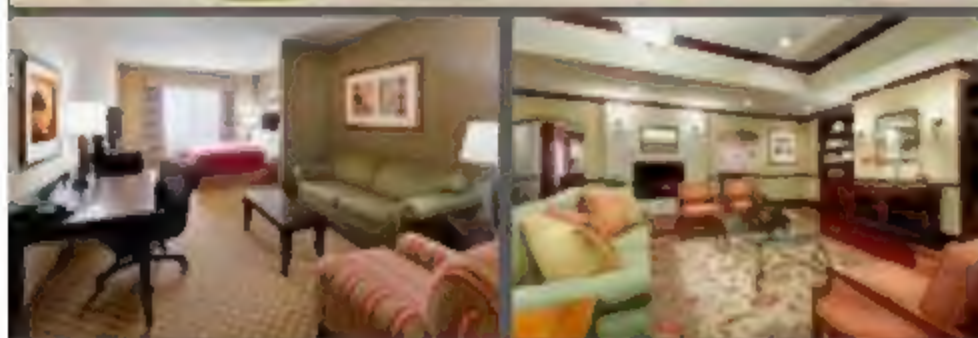
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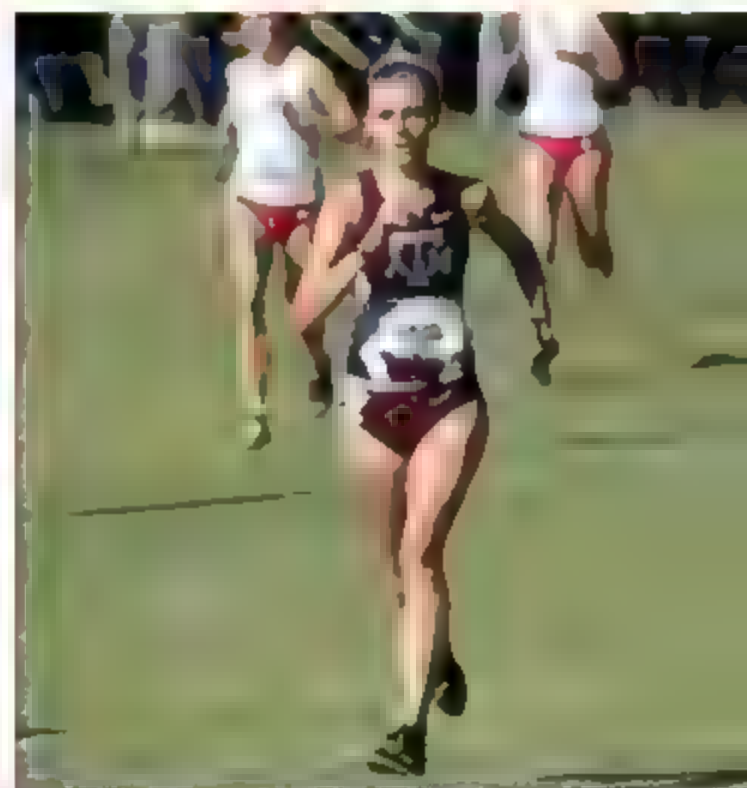






**[soccer]** Loaded with talent, this year's squad has rolled through the season and as of press time won 14 games in a row. They fell just one point shy of winning the regular season championship but rebounded to win the SEC tournament. Securing a two seed because of their stellar play, this team has already won it's first round game and is on a mission to win it all. The team has veteran leaders, skilled youth and tremendous depth and continues to add to their historic win streak!

**[cross country]** Both the men's and women's teams won three meets this fall as they took care of business and prepared for the post season. Both squads also had sixth place finishes at the SEC Championships. In the South Central Regional the men had a strong third place finish while the women finished sixth in the 15-team field. Jon Bishop and Christian Farris both qualified for the NCAA Cross Country Championships.



**[volleyball]** It's been a tough year for our volleyball team as they faced eight out of the ten top ranked teams in the country. The team has continued to work hard and stay together, and proved that they are not afraid to play anybody.



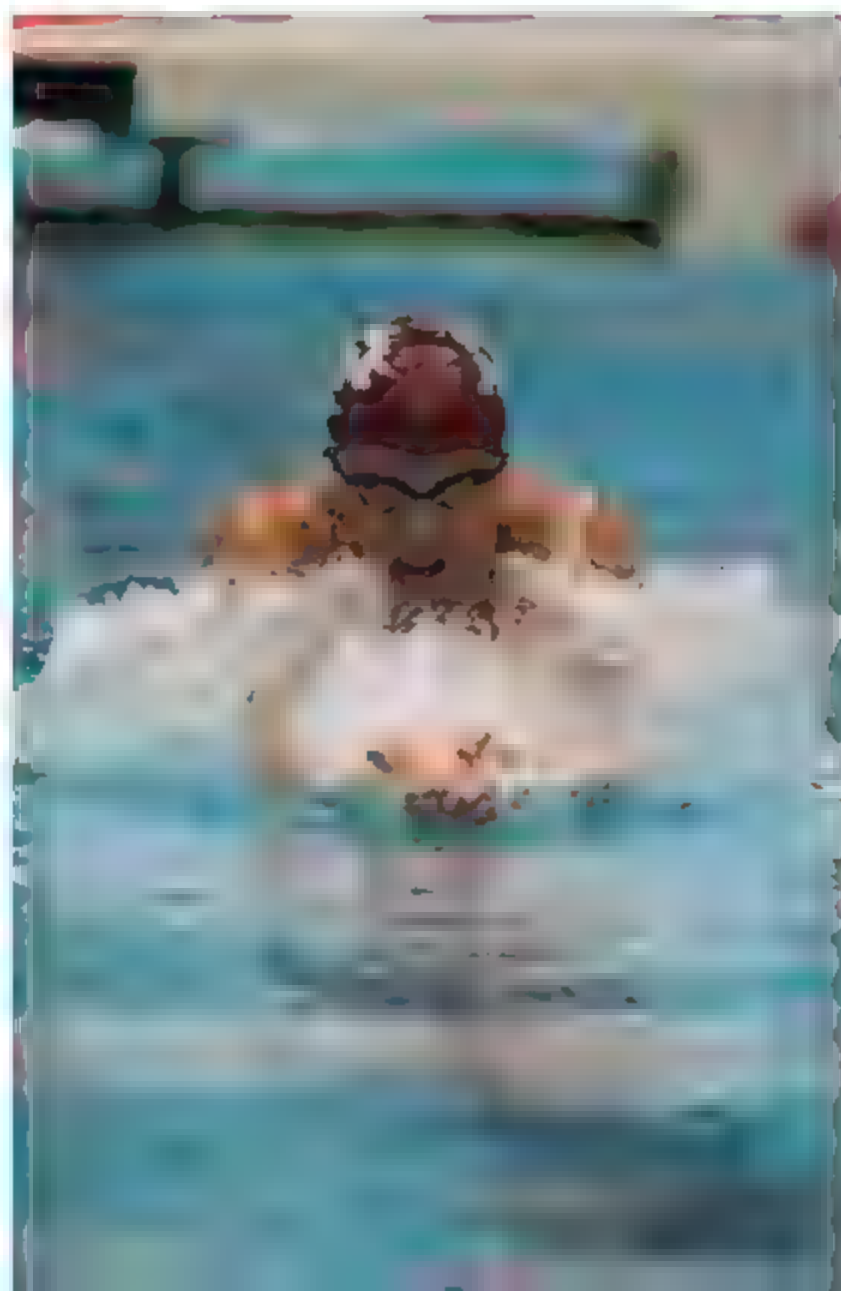
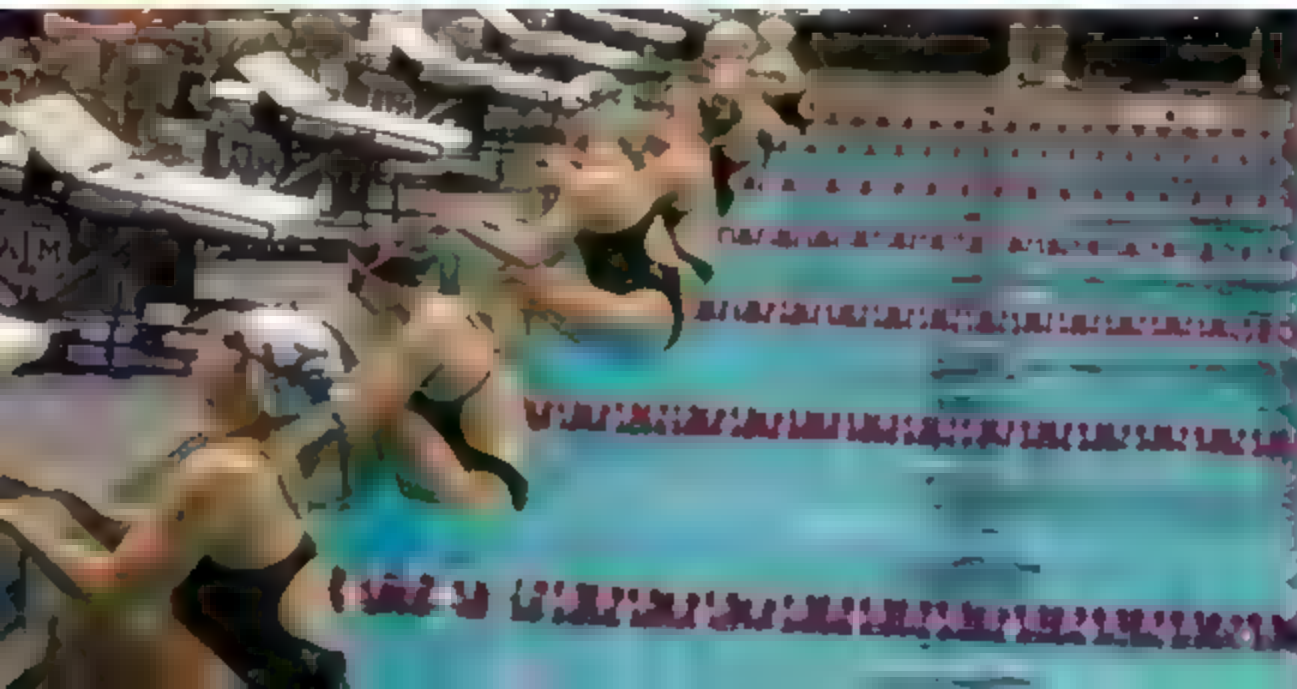




**[equestrian]** The Ags have cruised to a 6-1 record this fall. Their most recent win took place in Aggieland as the team beat #3 Auburn to complete the first half of the season. The Aggie Equestrian team is currently ranked #2 in the country, and are in search of their 13th national championship.



**[swimming & diving]** For the first time in 55 years, the men's team beat tu in a dual meet. The men won eight of sixteen events to upset the #5 Horns 158-142. The men have won three of four meets and are hungry for championships. The women's team has beaten #25 Notre Dame and #15 Auburn this season and lost a 3-point narrow decision to #2 Texas.





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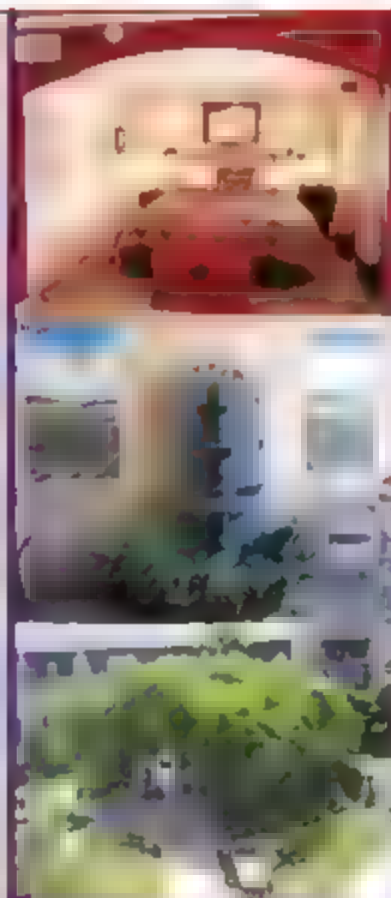


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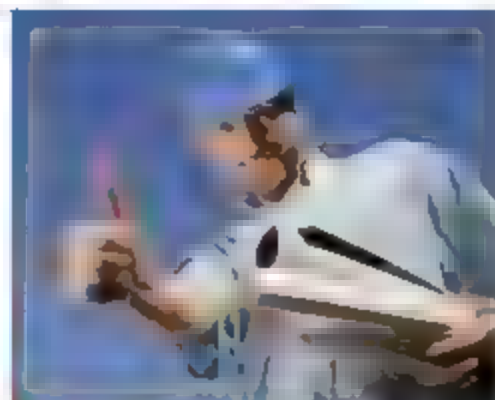
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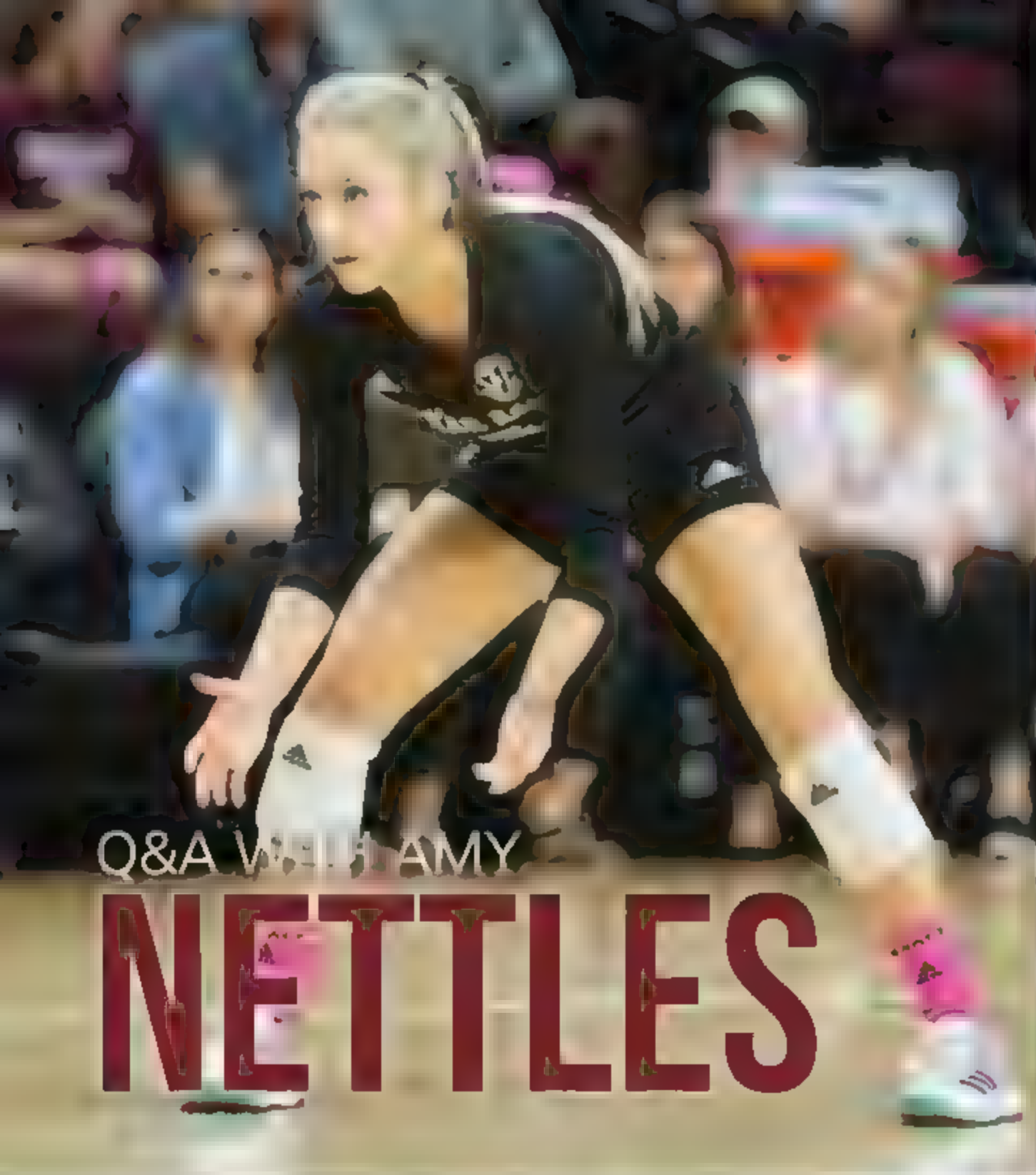
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Q&A WITH AMY

# NETTLES

**When did you start playing volleyball?**

I started playing volleyball when I was about three years old. I have two older sisters that played so I would go to their practices and I would bump with my dad or with whoever was there. I didn't actually start playing on a team until I was around ten

**Did you play other sports growing up?**

I wanted to play every sport but my parents wouldn't let me. (laughs) They thought I was going to get hurt playing basketball and gymnastics and soccer so they didn't let me. But I played softball for a long time and did pretty well in that, but I started playing club volleyball and I was like ok I'm done with softball I love this sport

**Tell me about your recruitment to Texas A&M.**

Ashlie Reasor and I played club volleyball

together since we were like 13 or 14 A&M started looking at her when we were so young Laurie came to a lot of our games. And an old player Jenny Banse is from my high school. So A&M, my high school and my club have a lot of connections. I wasn't really interested at first because my most of my family members are fans of "the other school in Austin" and I kind of wanted to go out of state. I was really interested in going to California. I had never played beach but I was kind of interested in it and then Steve Green who use to be an assistant coach came to a camp at Alamo, which was my club. His personality and my personality just clicked. He was spitting jokes at me and I was being sarcastic back and it was so much fun. He asked if I would be interested in coming to A&M and just started talking to me. And I wasn't at first, but then I kind of looked into it more and I was like this is a really cool place and then when I came to visit, I was like wow! It's not what I thought it was growing up (laughs). It's

so different than that and it was so great. I loved the coaches but they were kind of intimidating on my visit but the players that I met were so cool and so friendly. Everywhere else I had visited I would ask my mom, "Am I supposed to have like a feeling?" Like when I go on these official visits are you suppose to get a feeling or are you just supposed to think ok this seems nice. But when I finally came here, I was like yeah, I want to come here!

**What has your experience been like playing over the last four years?**

I've had a crazy ride. I came in as a freshman not expecting much. I was a preferred walk-on because the year before they had given the libero scholarship away. So, I came in thinking I'm going to work hard, feel it out, see what happens and hope I can see the court. And that's what I did, I worked hard. I was a DS (defensive specialist) for a long time and then around my birthday I got the call saying, "Amy go put on the jersey," and I haven't taken it off since then. It has been amazing. I feel like from high school until now my growth in the sport, and just my technique is crazy. My sister is a club coach at home and I tell her how John Corbelli teaches it, so she can teach it to your girls that way. I wasn't really taught the right way and that first year I kind of had to relearn a lot of things, a lot of technique which was kind of hard. You know you're playing for so long and it just becomes memory, and so I had to retrain myself a lot. I still make some of my old mistakes and John will be like, "Amy? Come on?" And I will be like, "Did I do that?" I've just grown a lot technique-wise, but 100% as a person not even on the court. You know the coaches really care. It's been so special I don't think every place has that. I really don't. I think a lot of places say they do but the coaches have spent a lot of time investing in me. Making sure I grow as a person and the people that they recruit, the older girls that I've played with like Angela, Sully, Katelyn Labhart have shaped my life completely, they have taken me under their wings and saw the person I was, saw my heart, and took me under their wing and directed me to The Lord and they changed my life. This place has done so much for me other than volleyball that will last me for a lifetime

**What are you studying and what do you hope to do after you leave A&M?**

That's a great question! (laughs) I am



University Studies/Business and my minors are Communication and Psychology. It is very broad, very generalized because I was very unsure for a long time. I thought I would graduate and then maybe go to nursing school or I would be a coach and I had all of these different ideas and I still kind of do. I'm unsure if I'm going to play professionally after college. It was a dream of mine but now that I've gotten a little bit older I'm not sure if I need that experience. I think it would be awesome, I would learn a lot and I love culture but I think I'm going to use that Aggie Network and find a job and see where that takes me and probably be a club coach and maybe one day be a club director

### How tough is it to be a student athlete?

I think it's the hardest job. (laughs) My Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule since I've been a freshman have been non-stop days. They've been class in the morning, workouts, try to fit in a meal, get to the gym because you have maintenance and you have to watch film or this or this or this. Have to get ready for practice and you can't just walk into the gym and expect to have a good practice. You have to visualize, take that time to prepare and make a point, ok I have to do this today, set goals and then go practice and then cold tub and then we don't get out of here until 6:30 or 7 sometimes because of what happens after practice. And then you have to eat and go home and study and try to sleep. I think when I'm done, I'm going to be I don't know what to do with all of this time but I think I'm going to enjoy it a lot at first. (laughs)

### What has been your best experience during your time at A&M?

I'm not sure probably, I take a lot of pride in our SEC Championship. That was just something really special. It was a special group of girls. It's one of my favorite teams, probably my most favorite team to ever be on. The coaches had never won a conference championship before, so it meant a lot to them. We worked so hard everyday and it was a battle and we beat some of the best teams. And it wasn't my best year, actually but it was so much fun. I had so much fun that year and I think that's probably one of my favorite times at A&M that I will remember forever! I got the ring to remember it by! (laughs)

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# WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH COACH BLAIR

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Because of the level of success that Gary Blair has attained here at A&M, the proverbial bar has been set high for Aggie women's basketball. Coach Blair admitted that last year's team was one of the staff's better coaching jobs as his squad, minus the presence of what he referred to as an "impact player" and an absence of depth, qualified for the program's twelfth straight NCAA tournament appearance.

Fortunately, this year's team has lots of depth and a couple of candidates for that impact player that Blair says all championship teams have. In fact, he said it was unacceptable for this squad to not make it to the NCAA tournament "They ought to fire the coach or something " " he joked with the media

The Aggies will start four veteran players and one true freshman, who just happens to be a McDonald's All American. Chennedy Carter was ranked the No. 6 player overall and No. 2 point guard in the 2017 class. She is the highest ranked player to sign with A&M out of high school and she will start at the point this season

Junior Danni Williams returns at the two and she ranked sixth in the SEC in average points per game with 16.6 points per contest. She has worked hard in the gym in the offseason on her driving to the basket. Blair has challenged her to go from being a good player to a great player by improving her defense and getting to the free throw line even more and becoming a complete player.

The coaches expect Jasmine Lumpkin to be the glue that holds this team together at the three. They want her to do all of the little things that might not show up on the stat sheet. Setting screens, crashing the boards, being a defensive stopper and being able to nail that 15-footer when they need it

Anriel Howard will start at the four and Blair had high praise for her. "I've never had a player like her, ever," Blair said. "Someone that plays hard on every play and never takes a play off." He told us that she has worked hard in the off-season to improve her high post shot and high post drive. He considers her one of the top four or five players in the league.

Anchoring the post again this year will be senior Khaalia Hillsman. She was voted preseason First Team All-SEC and is a big-time player. Gary believes people in the conference respect her game "She played well against the good teams, teams that we had to win she played very well."

The biggest difference this year is the incredible depth. The Aggies have 12 players fighting for playing time. Lulu McKinney will back up Carter at point and Blair is confident she can run his offense. Hillsman can have some much needed rest during games with Caylinne Martin who sat out last year to take her place.

The young talented newcomers will press for playing time. In the Aggies first exhibition everyone got a chance to play and the best teams in the conference are the ones that have depth

Last year Coach Blair was forced to play zone more than anytime in the last thirteen years. With the depth he can play more man to man which will make the Aggies defense much better

Blair said this team will take some bumps early but by the end of the year he expects four of his five starters to average double figures in scoring. He also believes they will get things rolling by the time they face South Carolina on New Year's eve in front of 14,000 for their first conference game





MEN'S

# BASKETBALL PREVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH COACH KENNEDY

BY ROSE AVENS '88

The excitement level for the 2017-2018 Aggie basketball season began back in March when Robert Williams announced he would return to A&M for another year. The talented forward was the consensus choice to be a lottery pick in the NBA Draft with most experts saying he would be off the board by the eighth pick. In a time where the best players typically are one and done in college, Williams decision was a shocking surprise that could mean big things for Texas A&M.

After not making it into the NCAA tournament last season, expectations are at an all time high this year as the Ags return a crop of veteran players and some exciting newcomers that can compete for championships. If the Aggies can stay healthy, this team has the players to make a run to the Final Four in San Antonio.

When Coach Kennedy arrived back in Aggieland, he didn't have the players to go up and down the floor in the fast paced manner that he had success with at Murray State. Since he has been here he has always wanted to do that but issues at the point guard position have not allowed that to happen.

This year's team is loaded with point guards. In exhibition action graduate transfer Duane Wilson and freshman TJ Starks have already shown the ability to run Coach Kennedy's offense. Starks also showed what a scorer he can be by lighting up the scoreboard with 21 points in his second game. JJ Caldwell is currently serving a five game suspension but is expected to be the Aggies starting point guard when he returns.

Tyler Davis returns for his third year with the Aggies. He has worked hard this offseason to once again transform his body into a lean, mean fighting machine. Davis told us that his goal this season is to be more athletic, a better rebounder, better at his all-around game and be able to stay in the game longer.

Admon Gilder returns for his third campaign and should benefit from the addition of three new point guards, which will allow him to move back to his shooting guard position. DJ Hogg returns to the team after surgery and is working his way back to competition shape after missing the offseason while rehabbing his injuries.

Robert Williams came back to improve his game and mature before making himself available for the NBA Draft. Last year he flew under the radar early but should be a marked man on opposing teams scouting reports the season. He has worked on his jump shot this summer and feels confident it will only make him a tougher player to stop this year.

Returning for his senior season is 6'10 swing man Tonny Trocha-Morelos. Playing against Texas in the Aggies exhibition to raise money for hurricane victims, he looked in mid-season form as he dropped 19 points including 3 three pointers on the Horns.

The Aggies have several newcomers that showed great promise in their exhibition games. Guard Jay Jay Chandler and forward Savion Flagg both look like they are ready to contribute off the bench and could really help Kennedy in the depth department.

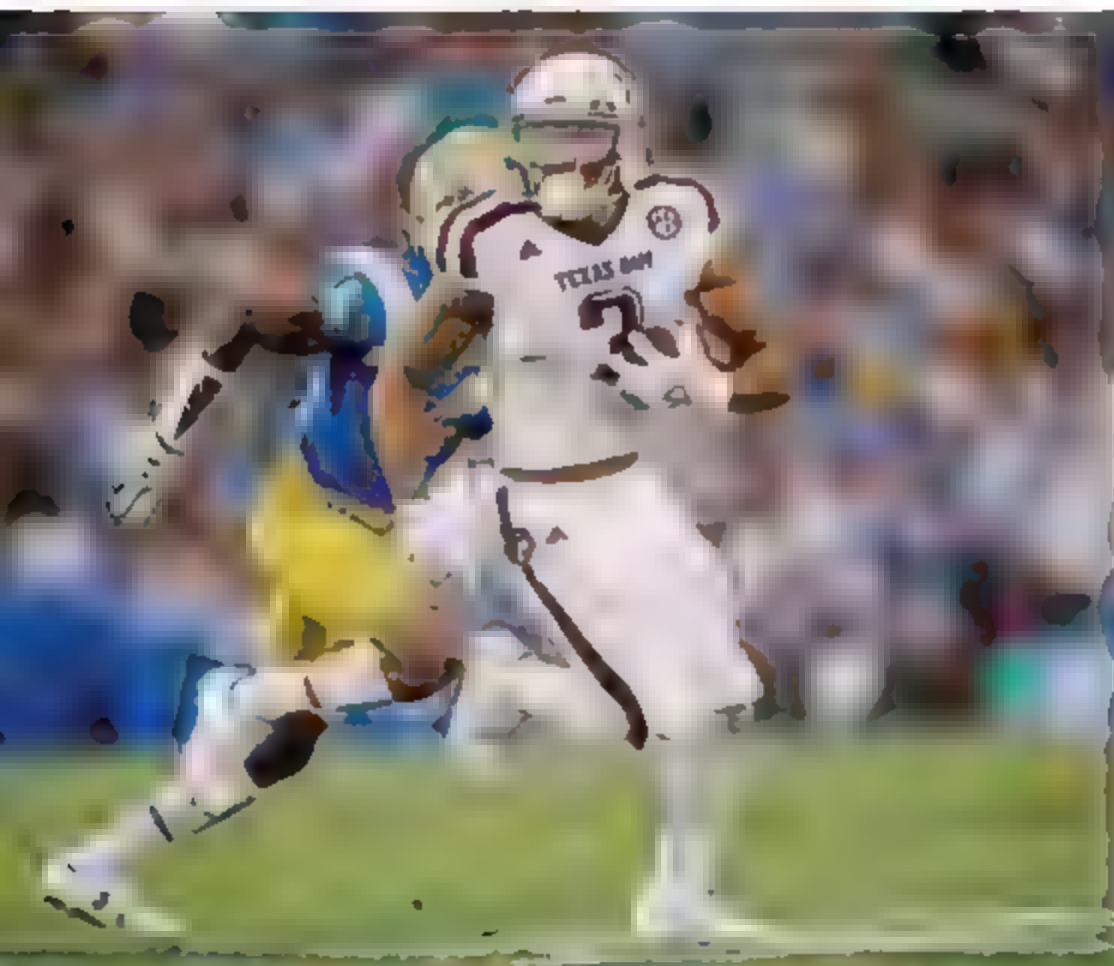
It looks like Coach Kennedy finally has all of the pieces he needs to not only get in the Big Dance, but to make a run.



# 2017 FOOTBALL REWIND

BY ROB HAVENS '88

[ GAME 1: **UCLA 45**, A&M 44 ]



## ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



vs

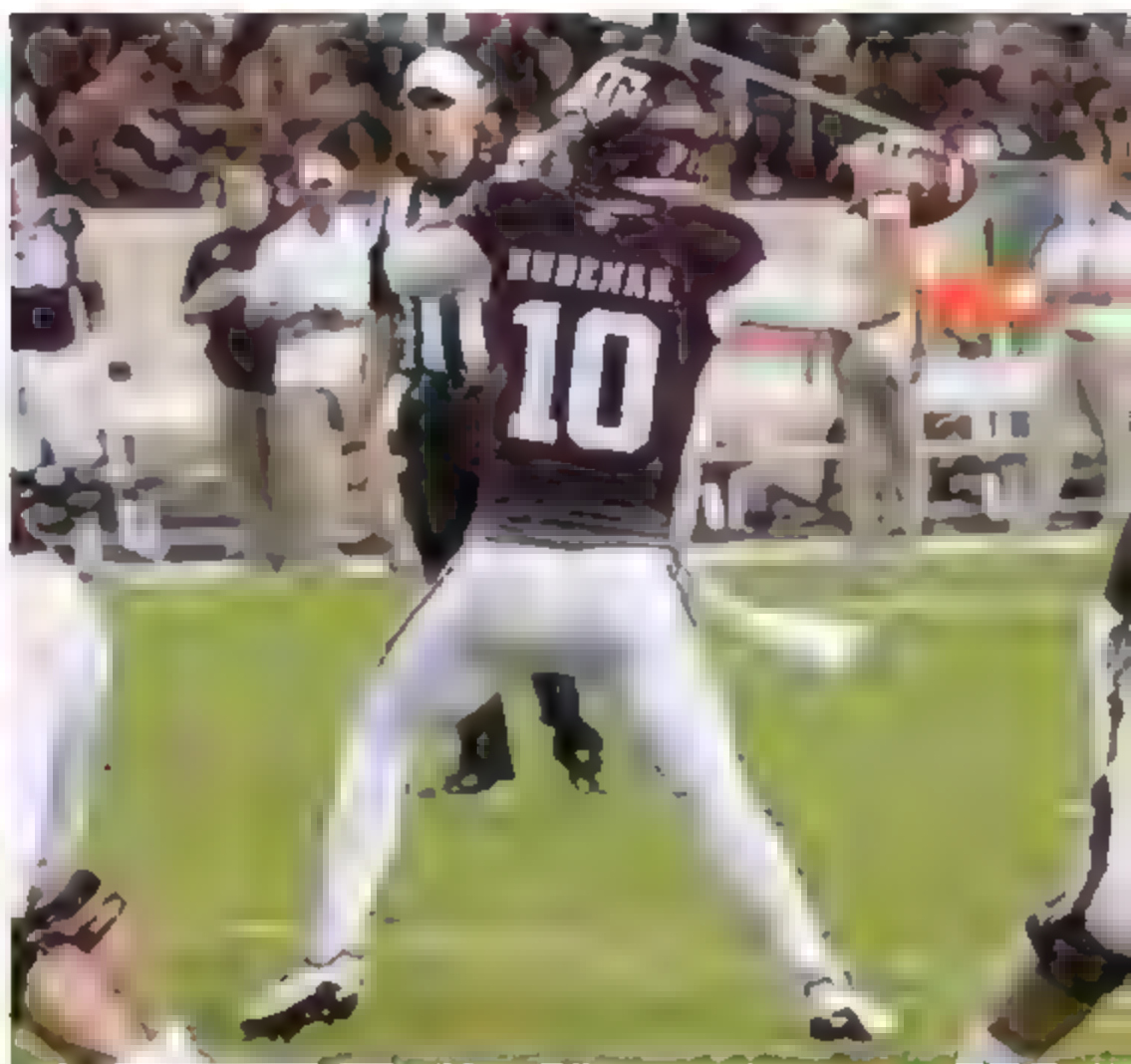


The 2017 season began with minimal expectations as the Aggies rolled into Pasadena to face one of the best quarterbacks in college football on one of the grandest stages, the Rose Bowl. The Aggies had not named a starting quarterback amongst the three candidates and everyone had their opinion who would start. Nick Starkel got the nod and drove the team down the field on their first possession going 75 yards for a touchdown and a great start to the season! He led the Aggies on four scoring drives producing a 24-3 advantage before the redshirt freshman suffered a broken ankle that would take him out of the game. Kellen Mond replaced him and the true freshman boosted the lead to 38-10 at the half. The Ags added two more field goals in the third quarter and led 44-10 before everything changed. UCLA's Josh Rosen ignited the Bruins and they scored five unanswered touchdowns to propel the team to a 45-44 victory. The 12th man was stunned as they watched one of the biggest comebacks in NCAA history unfold.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AGGIE ATHLETICS

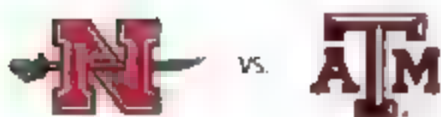


## [ GAME 2: **A&M 24**, NICHOLLS STATE 14 ]



### ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME

In the home opener vs Nicholls St., the team showed the effects of the tough loss vs UCLA as they struggled to a 24-14 win. Mond started for the Aggies at quarterback and the team posted 14 points in the first quarter. The team struggled to move the ball after that and senior Jake Hubenak took over early in the third quarter and rallied the Aggies to a win after the game was tied in the fourth period. The highlight of the game was the coming-out performance of running back Kendall Bussey who ran for 97 yards and the go-ahead touchdown late in the game. It was the fifth straight time that Texas A&M was victorious in their home opening game.





## [ GAME 3: **A&M 45**, LA-LAFAYETTE 21 ]



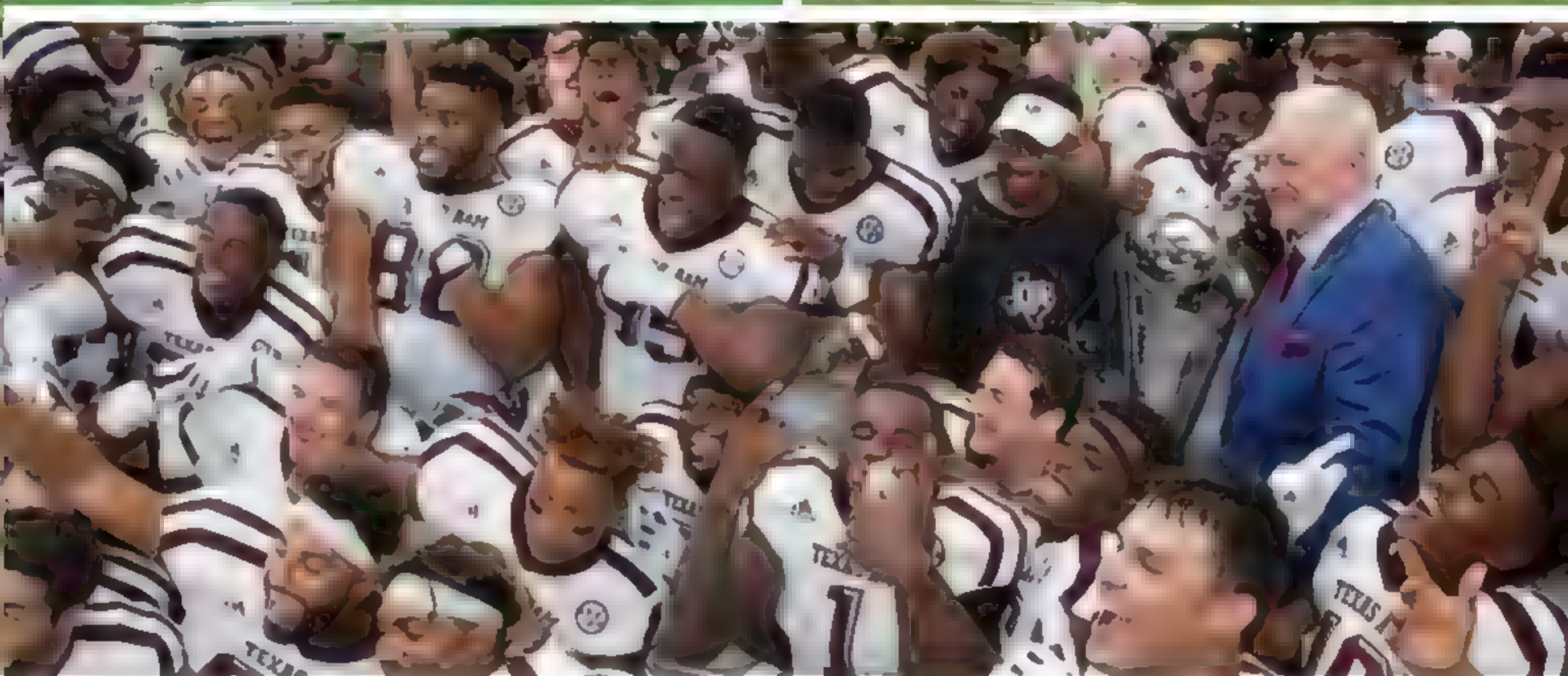
### ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



The Aggies had a Jekyll and Hyde performance in game three as the team struggled in the first half and trailed 21-14 before coming out in the second half and putting it on the University of Louisiana Lafayette. After the game, Sumlin called the team, "A work in progress." Mond got the start and completed 21 pass attempts for 301 yards and three touchdowns. He hooked up with eleven receivers during the contest and Ausbon, Kirk and Buckley all found pay dirt after catches. With Trayveon Williams knucked up the Aggie stable of backs stepped up and four different backs contributed to the win. Jacob Kibodi showed he was ready to play with 101 yards on the ground including a 67-yard scamper for a touchdown. Senior Damion Ratley had the biggest reception of his Aggie career with a 76-yard catch that came up just short of the goal line.



## [ GAME 4: **A&M 50**, ARKANSAS 43 ]



### ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



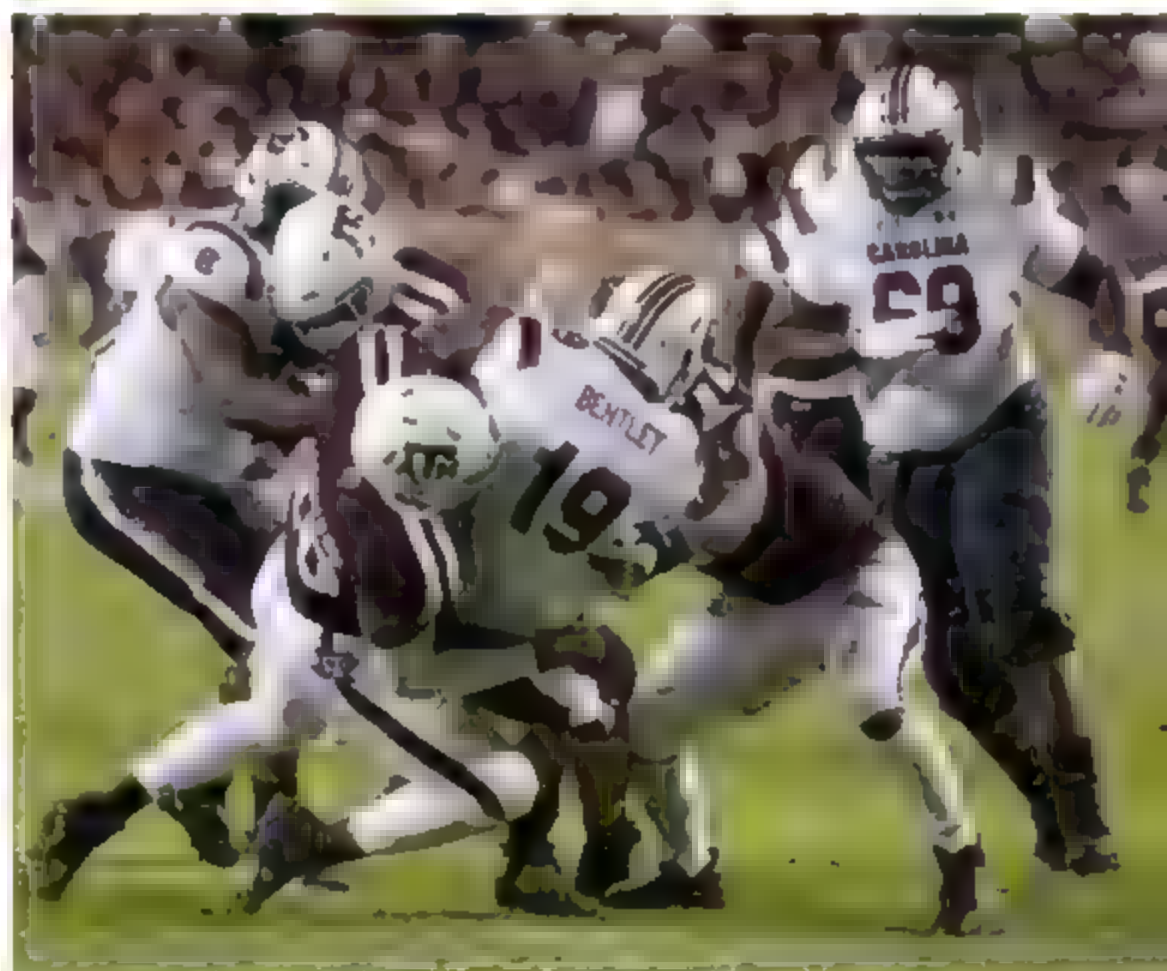
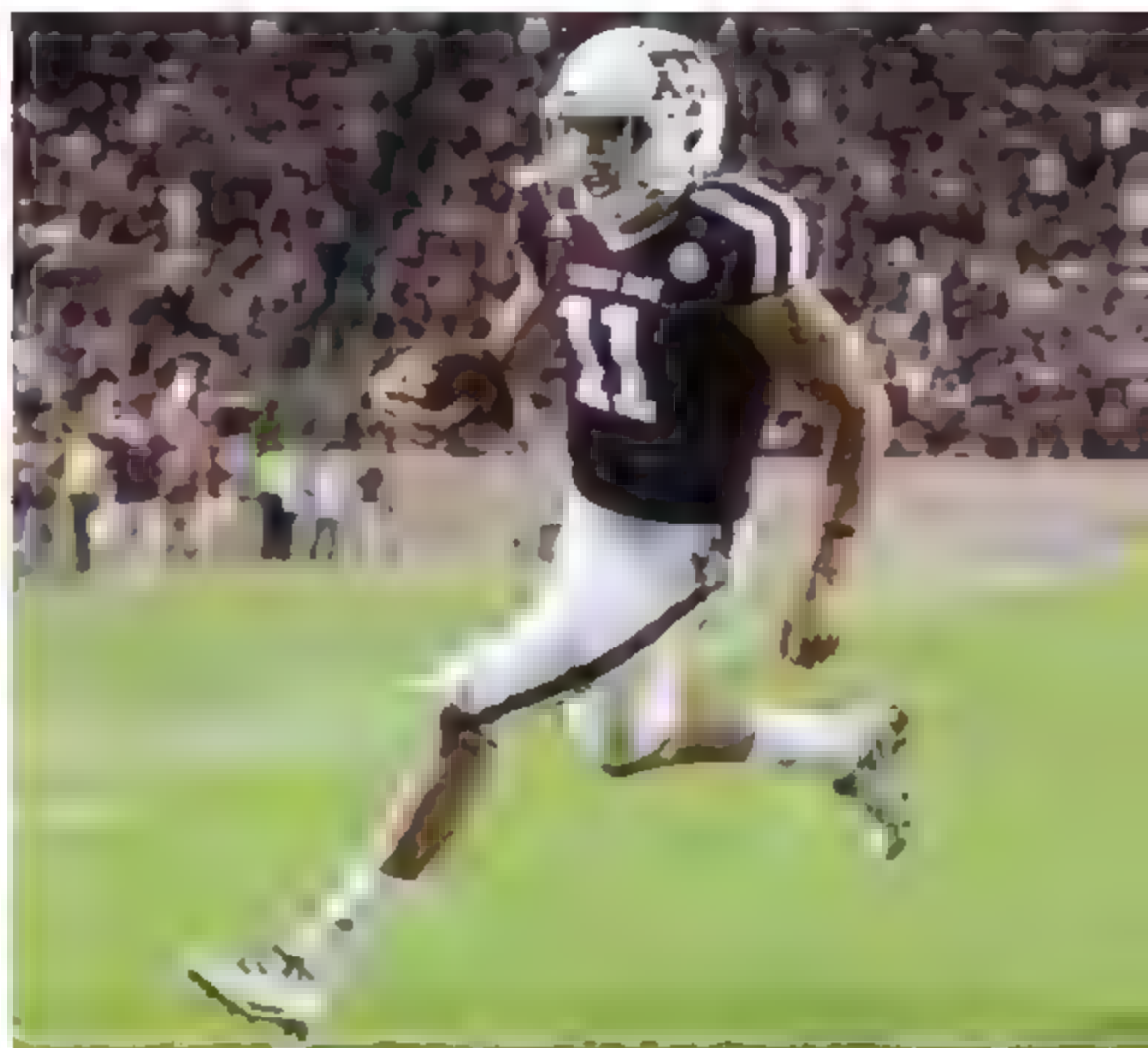
vs.



The most exciting game of the year took place in Jerry World as the Aggies beat the Hogs in overtime 50-43. The back and forth game saw eight lead changes and once again the good guys came out with a win. Kellen Mond continued to improve by completing 14 passes for 216 yards and two touchdowns. He also showed why he was so highly recruited as a dual threat quarterback as he scampered all over the field generating 102 yards on the ground. Christian Kirk was the player of the game scoring three touchdowns on the day. The first was on an 81-yard pitch and catch on a broken play as Mond threw a perfect strike to Christian for the first TD. Trailing in the fourth period Kirk had a 100-yard kickoff return touchdown. His final catch of the day was a touchdown reception in overtime that gave the Aggies the lead. Armani Watts intercepted Allen's last pass in the end zone to clinch the win.



## [ GAME 5: **A&M 24**, SOUTH CAROLINA 17 ]



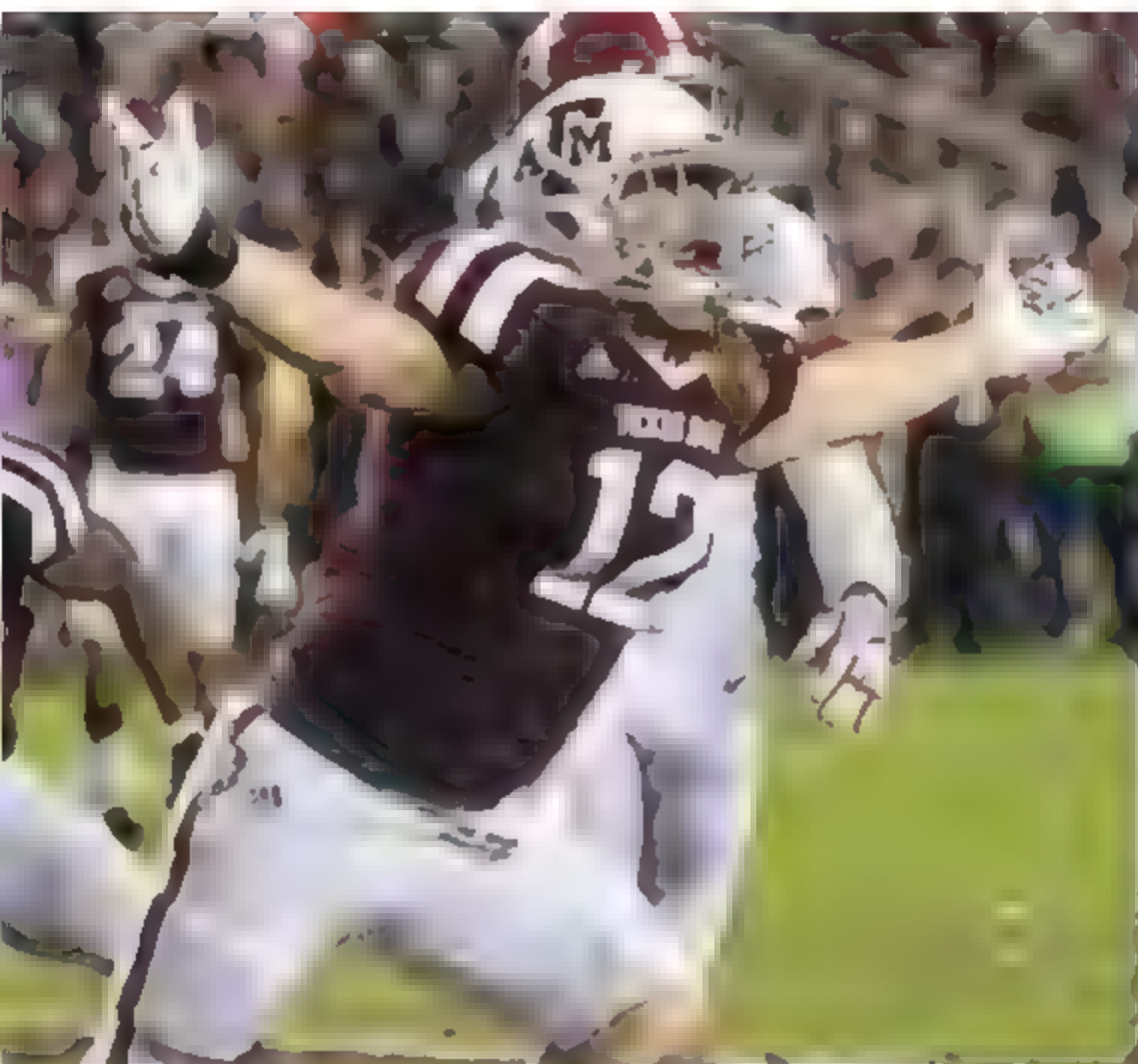
### ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



Kyle Field was electric as the Aggies triumphed over the Gamecocks on the final night of September. After a scoreless first quarter, the team scored the first touchdown of the day on a Trayveon Williams one-yard run. South Carolina reeled off 17 unanswered points before the Aggies turned the game around before a raucous crowd at Kyle Field. Kerth Ford scored the tying touchdown and the go-ahead score racking up 70 yards on the ground. John Chavis' defense pressured talented QB Jake Bentley all night and came up with the big plays to end the game and give the Aggies the win. The defense produced seven sacks and held USC to only 279 total yards. It was the Ags fifth straight win against SEC East opponents.



## [ GAME 6: **ALABAMA 27**, A&M 19 ]



### ▲ **PHOTOS OF THE GAME**



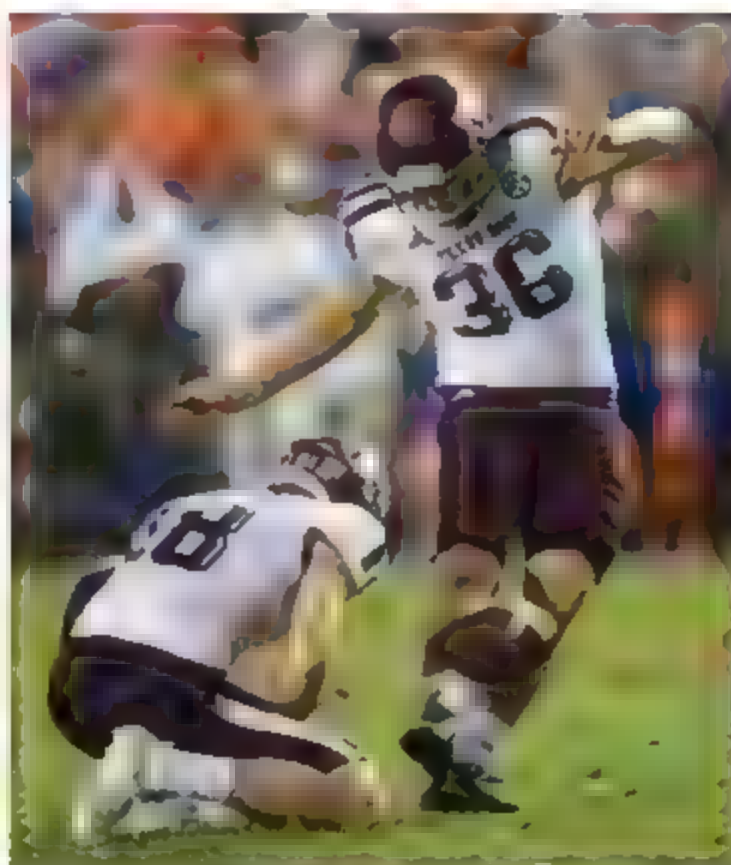
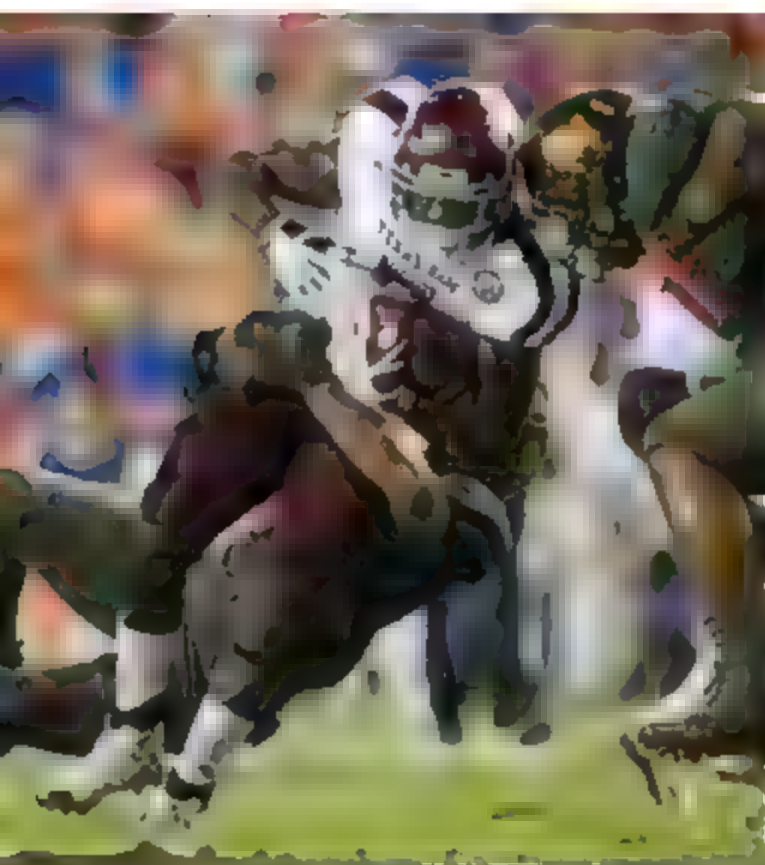
vs



The Tide rolled into Kyle Field having destroyed its two previous opponents (Vandy and Ole Miss) by a total of 125-3. The Ags on the other hand had gained momentum after four games and looked for the upset win over the nations best team. The Aggies took the early lead with a 52-yard field goal by LaCamera but it was short lived as Bama tailback Damien Harris raced through the Aggie defense only 13 seconds later for a 75-yard touchdown run. Alabama scored 24 unanswered points to take hold of the game but the Aggie fought back. Christian Kirk scored on a two yard pass from Mond late in the third and Cullen Gillaspia blocked a punt for a safety to cut the lead in half. Kellen Mond got the first rushing touchdown given up by Alabama all year on a one-yard rush that drew the Aggies within eight. An onside kick attempt on the next play was secured by an Alabama player to end the Aggies' chances for a win.



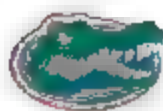
## [ GAME 7: A&M 19, FLORIDA 17 ]



### ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



vs

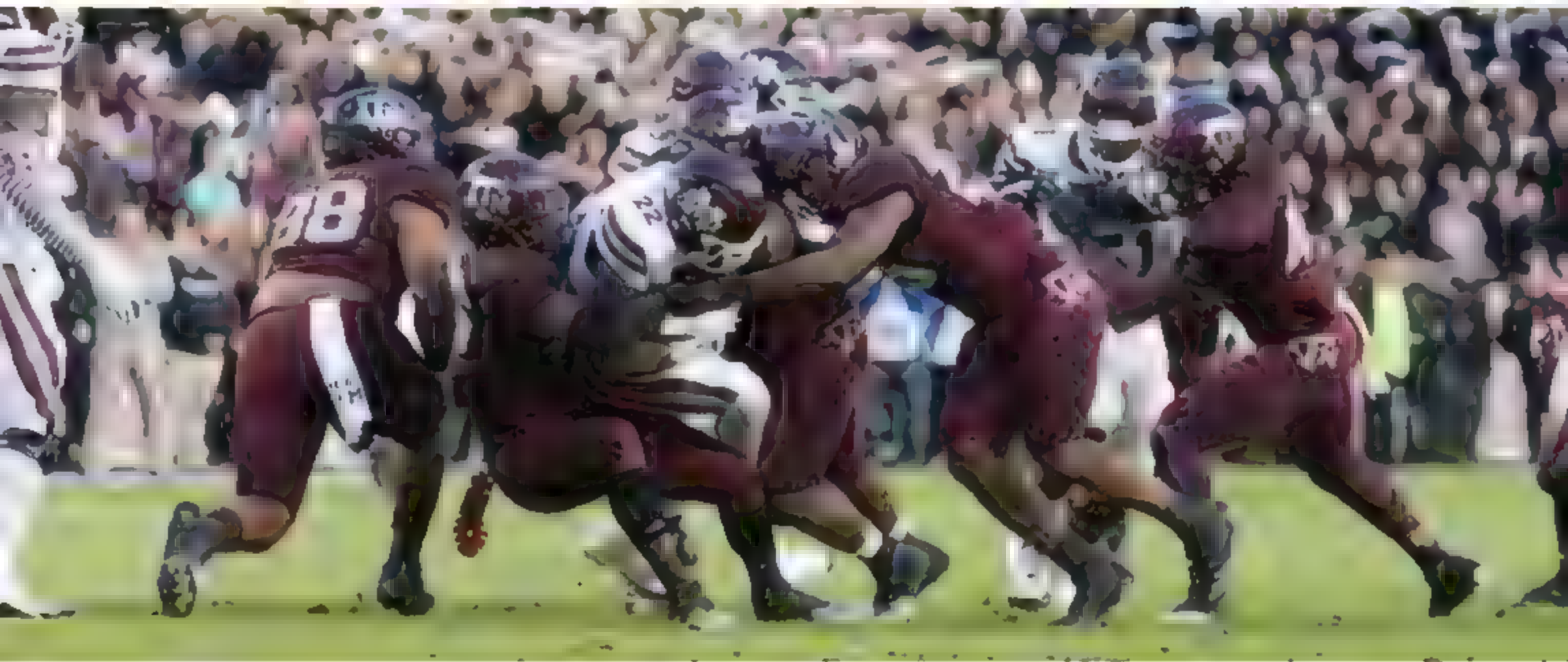
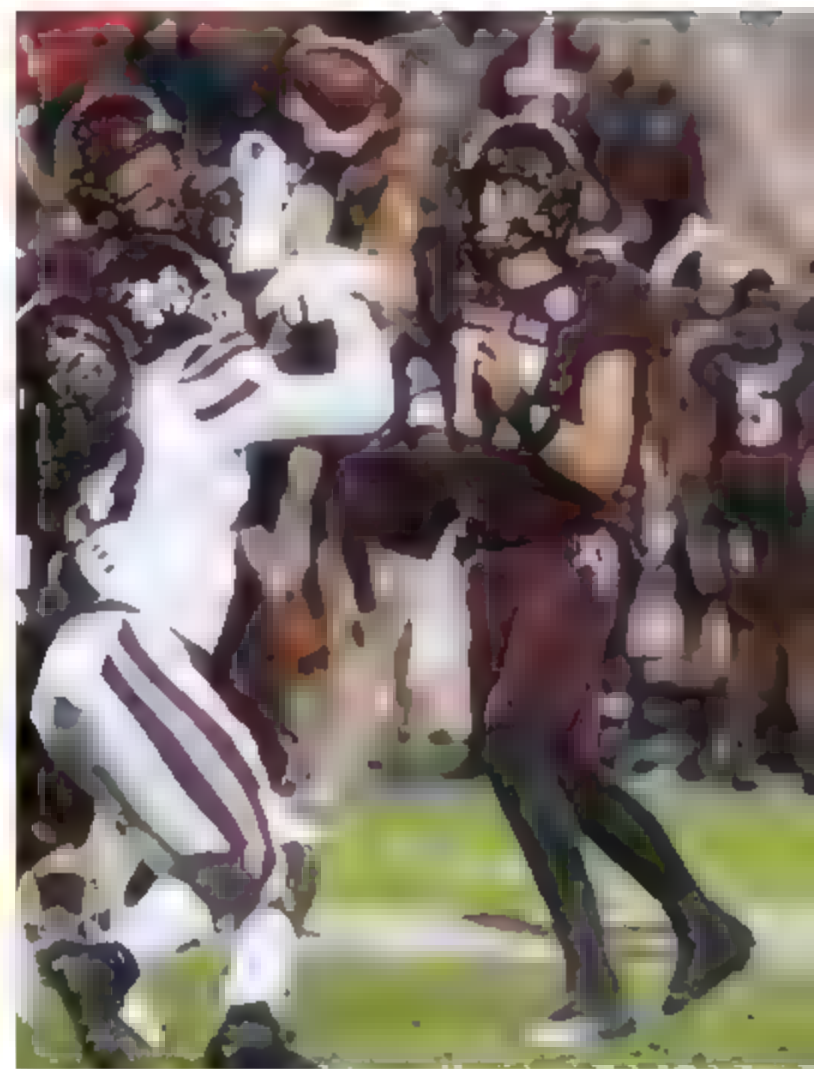


The Aggies showed true grit and a “never say die” attitude as they defeated the Florida Gators at The Swamp in game seven. The team only amassed 263 total yards but that was enough as Florida native Daniel LaCamera connected on four field goals to give the Aggies a 19-17 win in Gainesville. Mond completed just 8 passes in the game but used his legs to make plays rushing for 52 yards and a big 9 yard touchdown run in the third quarter that tied the game. Christian Kirk has had few opportunities to return punts this season, but late in the game a mistake by one of the nations best punters allowed Kirk to make a return of 43 yards to set up the game winning field goal with 58 seconds to go. The defense stopped Florida in the fourth quarter and the Aggies scored on all three possessions to win the game. Tyrel Dodson intercepted Franks last pass attempt to clinch the victory and give the Ags a huge win on the road.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AGGIE ATHLETICS



## [ GAME 8: **MISSISSIPPI STATE 35, A&M 14** ]



### ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



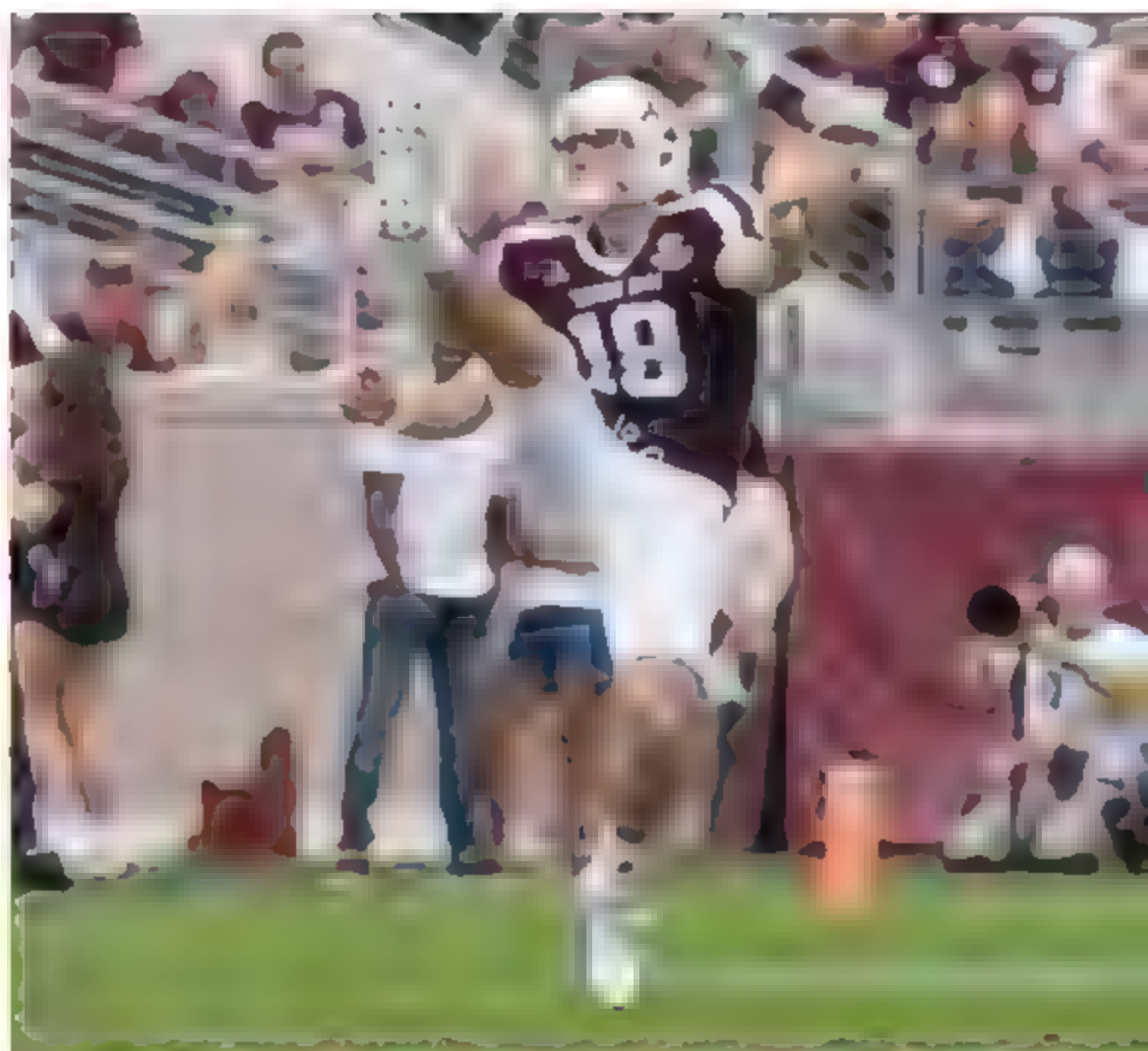
vs



After a bye week, the Aggies welcomed Mississippi State to Kyle Field. The defense struck early when they batted a pass up in the air on the Dogs first series and Otaru Alaka intercepted it. Unfortunately the Aggies were not able to capitalize setting the tone for the game. The offense produced only 43 yards in the first half and trailed 14-0. State added 21 more in the second half defeating the Ags 35-14. MSU quarterback had another stellar game rushing for 105 yards with a touchdown and throwing for another 141 and 2 more scores through the air. After suffering a big hit in the fourth quarter, Sumlin chose to replace Mond with Nick Starkel. Seeing his first action since UCLA he drove the team down the field before an errant throw was intercepted and returned 90 yards for a score. Starkel was able to lead the team on a touchdown drive when he found Camron Buckley downfield. The talented receiver battled through defenders and would not be denied until he dove into the end zone.



# [ GAME 9: AUBURN 42, A&M 27 ]



## ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



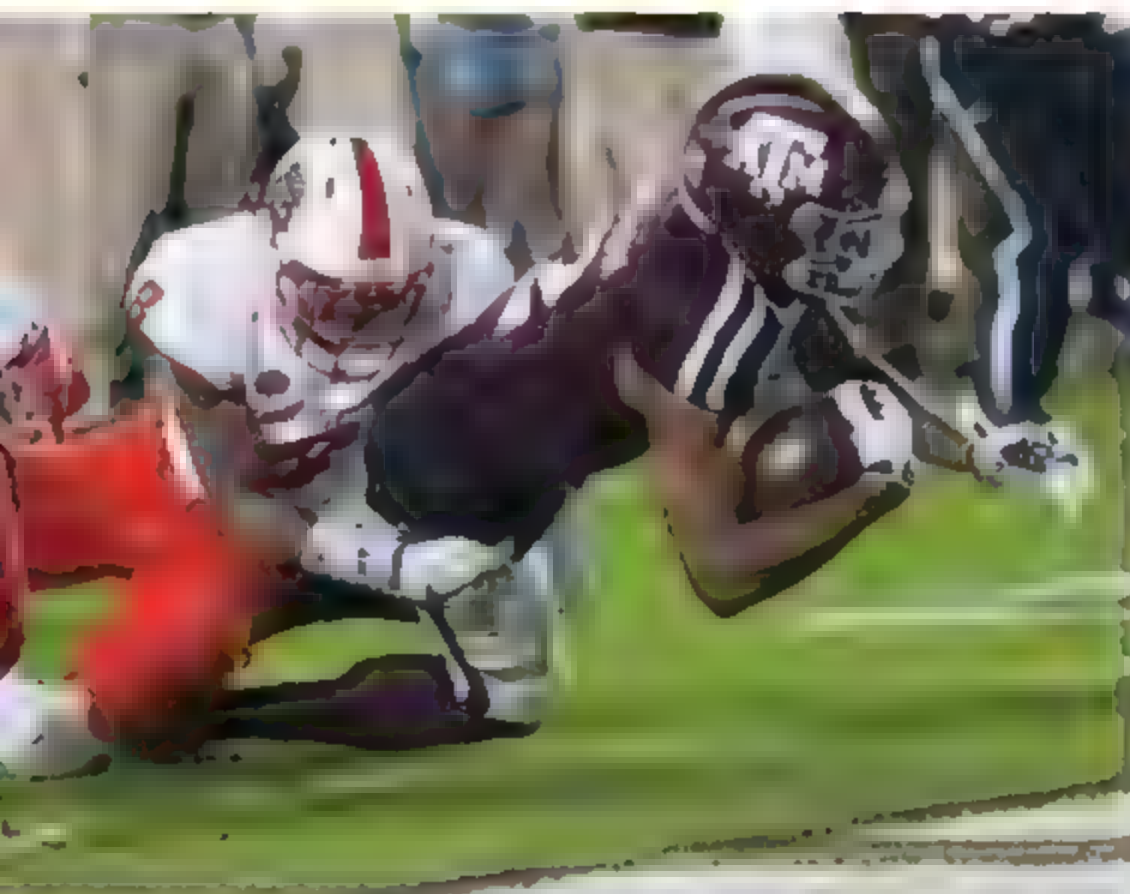
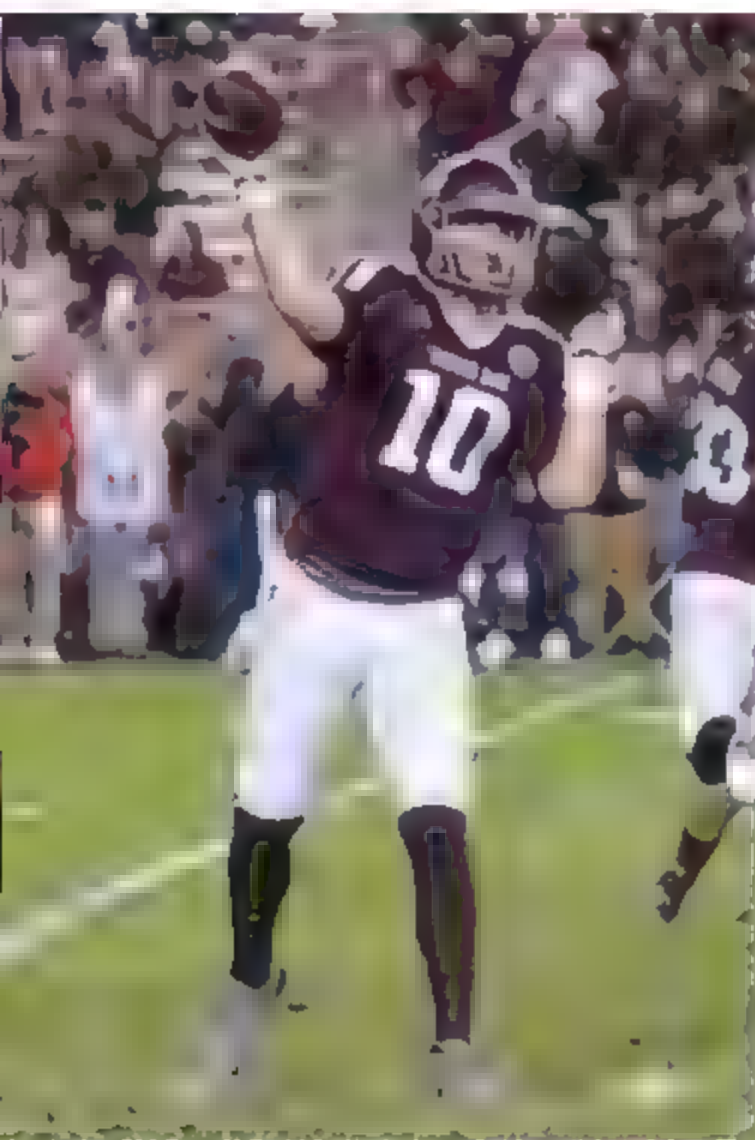
vs.



Trying to avoid another late season collapse, the Aggies took on #16 Auburn on the first Saturday of November. Kellen Mond started the game but was only able to lead the team on one scoring drive that resulted in a field goal. Midway through the second quarter, Sumlin went with Starkel who immediately sparked the offense and led the Aggies on a 9 play 80-yard touchdown drive that ended with a Keith Ford two-yard scoring run. The Ags added a field goal and looked to be in control until the following drive when the Tigers completed a 53-yard bomb for another touchdown. On the next drive, the Aggies had a punt blocked and Auburn recovered it in the end zone for another score. The two scores changed the whole game and the Tigers added 21 in the second half to beat the Aggies 42-27. Damion Ratley had his best game as an Aggie with four catches and two TD's including a 62 yard catch and score.



# [ GAME 10: **A&M 55**, NEW MEXICO 14 ]



## ▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



vs



Texas A&M closed out the home portion of their season with a blow out win over New Mexico. Nick Starkel got his first start since being injured in the UCLA game. The Lobos stacked the box and forced the Aggies to beat them through the air, which is exactly what they did. Starkel completed 21-of-30 passes for 416 yards in only one half of action. Six different receivers contributed as the Aggies had 499 yards through the air. Roshauud Paul, Christian Kirk and Jhamon Ausbon all broke the century mark with individual yards for the game. Kirk scored two times via a catch early in the game and a 90-yard punt return. Sumlin emptied the bench in the second half including an appearance by lifelong Aggie Jake Hubenak who was able to complete his final throw on Kyle Field. Damion Ratley had two touchdowns in his final home game at Texas A&M.



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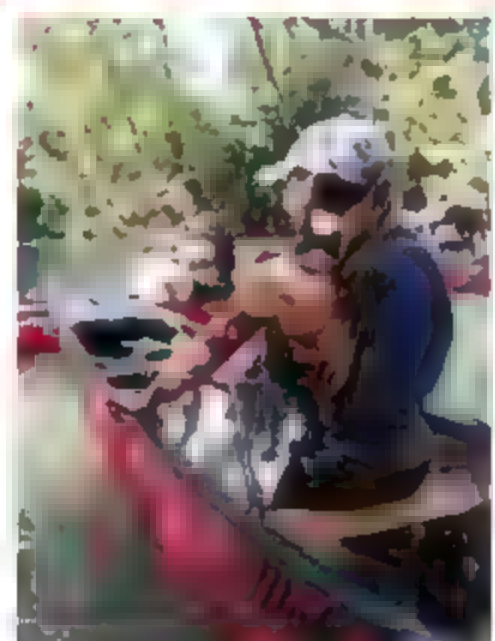
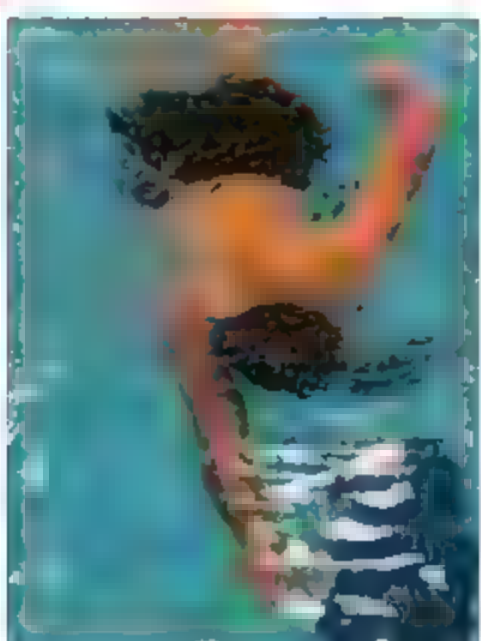
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## Volleyball Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

One of the things that makes Texas A&M sport clubs so special is that they allow students to attend the school they love and still compete in the sport they enjoy without undertaking the time constraints required to play Division I sports. Volleyball Club president Sarah Baerenwald is a great example.

"I joined because I had offers to play at various schools throughout the U.S., but my brothers were Aggies and I've always wanted to be an Aggie too. I guess you could say I bleed maroon."

Sarah had the ability to play at the highest level, but coming to A&M was more important to her. She told AI, "Members typically join the club because they had the chance to play at the collegiate level for the NCAA but wanted to enjoy college life without the pressure of being a student-athlete."

The Volleyball Club allows the team members to compete at the highest level

while at the same time focusing on all of the other things that make Texas A&M so special. Currently, 24 club members make up an A team and a B team.

"Our main rival is the University of Texas," Sarah said "We play them throughout the year, and at almost every tournament, our club plays theirs in the finals."

Sarah told us that either the A team or the B team has won the entire tournament at every tournament the team has been to this Fall, which is something they are very proud of.

Members usually have previous high school experience or hometown club experience before trying out for the team, which practices every Tuesday and Thursday for two hours.

We asked Sarah what her favorite

thing about being on the team is and she replied, "I get the chance to represent the school that I love so much playing a game that I have enjoyed and loved my whole life. It's the best of both worlds. The best thing about being president of the club is being able to listen to the girls' opinions and change the club for the better. I get to watch the club grow and change each year, and that is absolutely amazing."

In April, both the Women's and Men's Volleyball Club teams compete in nationals, a much-anticipated event. Baerenwald says, "It's an opportunity to support the two clubs and to become closer through a game we all love. We do the Aggie yells, too, which is so much fun."



## Cycling Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Texas A&M's Cycling Club was established in 1976, making it one of the oldest sport clubs on campus. President Charles Arnold joined the club to learn more about cycling and to have others to ride with. "My favorite thing about being on the team is just having a group of people to ride with every week and share cycling memes with," Arnold said. "The best thing about being president is that I get to pick the race courses for the spring; it's just fun seeing what routes are available and what would be fun to ride without any traffic around."

The club competes in mountain biking in the fall and road races in the spring. The competitions are typically two-day events with a short track where athletes complete many loops, the first of which is a time trial against the clock followed by a longer race course.

The club currently consists of approximately 35 members. Deanna Mathis and Andrew Flemming competed this fall at Mountain Bike Nationals. Last year, Omar Nunez, Brady Reed, and Christina Rigsby competed at Road

Nationals. Omar and Brady placed in the top 15 for the time trial.

The Aggies keep the rivalry going with the University of Texas as they compete in the same conference. Arnold says it's a friendly rivalry, "We have a ride to Snows BBQ where we meet up with the UT team and get barbecue."

The team won the SCCC conference championship this fall in mountain biking for the fourth year in a row. In the spring, they will compete in their home race on February 17th and 18th.

We asked Arnold what makes a great cyclist and whether the club requires racing experience to join. He replied, "A great cyclist is someone who can balance school and training. Top athletes will train 20-plus hours a week, but they are still students and still have responsibilities they must attend to. We have a wide range of members, and we never turn anyone away, so all experience levels are welcome."

The team has road rides almost every day of the week and mountain rides on

Thursdays and throughout the weekend. Arnold's favorite experience so far has been traveling on his first road trip with the team. He remembered, "We all piled into our host housing; just getting to experience traveling with the team was a lot of fun!"



Visit [recsports.tamu.edu](https://recsports.tamu.edu) for more info about Texas A&M Sport Clubs.







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